

George Frideric Handel's

# MESSIAH

performed by  
Handel & Haydn  
Society of Boston

Thomas Dunn, *Artistic Director*

Tuesday, December 13, 1983

7:45 p.m.

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Thomas Dunn, *Artistic Director*

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Tuesday, December 13, 1983 at 7:45 p.m.

Thomas Dunn, *conducting*  
Elizabeth Pruett, *soprano*  
Mary Davenport, *contralto*  
Stanley Cornett, *tenor*  
Sanford Sylvan, *baritone*

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

MESSIAH

Covent Garden Version of 1752

Part I

*Intermission* (10 minutes)

Part II

*Intermission* (10 minutes)

Part III

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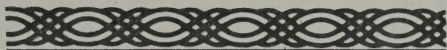
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# T E X T



## PART I

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,  
saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and  
cry unto her, that her warfare is accom-  
plished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The voice of him that crieth in the wil-  
derness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for  
our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every  
mountain and hill made low: the crooked  
straight, and the rough places plain.

And the glory of the Lord shall be  
revealed, and all flesh shall see it together:  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Isaiah 40:1-5

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once,  
a little while, and I will shake the heavens,  
and the earth, the sea, and the dry land;

And I will shake all nations, and the  
desire of all nations shall come.

Haggai 2:6,7

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly  
come to his temple, even the messenger of  
the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold,  
he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

But who may abide the day of his  
coming? And who shall stand when he  
appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire.

And he shall purify the sons of Levi,  
that they may offer unto the Lord an offer-  
ing in righteousness.

Malachi 3:1-3

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and  
bear a son, and shall call his name  
Immanuel, "God-with-us."

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

O thou that tellest good tidings to  
Zion, get thee up into the high mountain;  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusa-  
lem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it  
up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of  
Judah, Behold your God!

Isaiah 40:9

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and  
the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For, behold, darkness shall cover the  
earth, and gross darkness the people: but  
the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory  
shall be seen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy  
light, and kings to the brightness of thy  
rising:

Isaiah 60:1-3

The people that walked in darkness  
have seen a great light: and they that dwell  
in the land of the shadow of death, upon  
them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a  
son is given: and the government shall be  
upon his shoulder: and his name shall be  
called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty  
God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of  
Peace.

Isaiah 9:2,6



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There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men.

Luke 2:8-11,13,14

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is the righteous Savior,

And he shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Zechariah 9:9,10

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Isaiah 35:5,6

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: and he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah 40:11

Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.

Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

## PART II

Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Isaiah 53:3

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

Isaiah 50:6

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4-6

All they that see him laugh him to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying,

He trusted in God that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he delight in him.

Psalms 22:7,8

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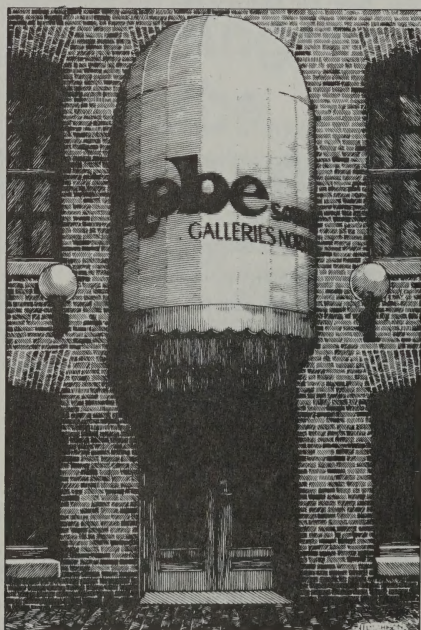
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Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; he is full of heaviness: he looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man; neither found he any to comfort him.

Psalm 69:20

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow.

Lamentations 1:12

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of thy people was he stricken.

Isaiah 53:8

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

Psalm 16:10

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Psalm 24:7-10

Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?

Let all the angels of God worship him.

Hebrews 1:5,6

Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive: and received gifts for men; yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.

Psalm 68:18,11

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Their sound is gone out unto all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Romans 10:15,18

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Psalm 2:1-4,9

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Revelation 19:6

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

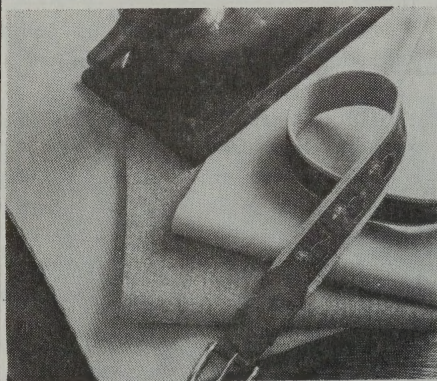
Revelation 11:15

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Revelation 19:16

### PART III

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Job 19:25,26

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Behold, I tell you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet: the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

If God be for us who can be against us?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.

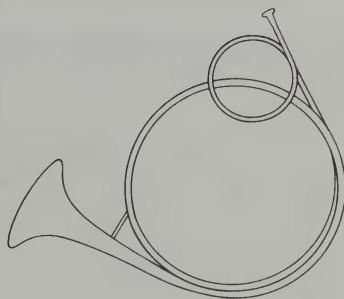
Romans 8:31,33,34

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by His blood to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Blessing, and honour, glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Revelation 5:12,13

AMEN.



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## Less . . . and More . . . and Less in Handel's *Messiah*

by Joseph Dyer

For a work with a nearly unbroken performance history *Messiah* has suffered unduly at the hands of its interpreters. Composed in 1741 and given its premiere the next year in Dublin, *Messiah* was received with enthusiastic acclaim and held its place in Dublin's musical life long after Handel's departure. In London, however, Handel was deterred from promoting this oratorio because of clerical opposition. Its text was not a paraphrase of the bible like all of the other oratorios, but the very words of the Scripture. To sing these words in a theater, the usual site of Handel's oratorio presentations, was considered by many to be an impudent affront to the divinely inspired text.

This resistance evaporated, at least partially, in the 1750s, when Handel directed performances every year at Covent Garden and in the chapel of the London Foundling Hospital. The final performance in the direct Handelian tradition took place at the Hospital on May 3, 1759, a few weeks after Handel's death. The list of performance personnel and the reimbursement each received was apparently drawn up before he died. It included the following distribution of singers and instrumentalists:

6 boys	12 violins
12 adult singers	3 violas
5 soloists	2 cellos
	2 basses
	4 oboes
organ	4 bassoons
harpsichord	2 trumpets
	2 horns
	tympani

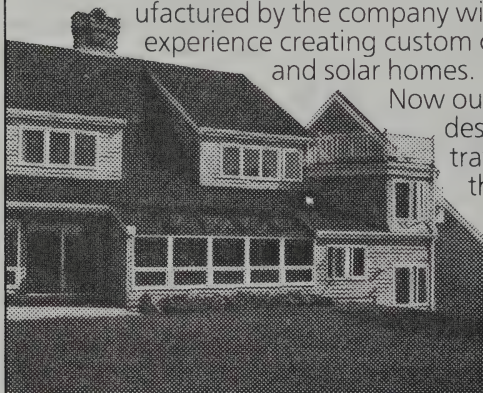
This list corresponds quite exactly to Handel's needs for the presentation of *Messiah*.

The *Messiah* tradition at the Foundling continued under Handel's assistant, John Christopher Smith, and later under the blind organist-composer, John Stanley. Given the limited size of the building and the natural desire to have as many paying seats as possible, we may assume that performances during the two decades following Handel's death did not depart from his intentions in any measurable degree. Then in 1784, at a magnificent commemorative festival on what was thought to be the centenary of Handel's birth, an alarming inflation began to threaten the integrity of *Messiah*. The oratorio was performed in the presence of George III at Westminster Abbey with a chorus of 275 and an orchestra of 250. The floodgates were opened, and the English, obsessed with megalomania, attempted to make each successive festival performance more gargantuan than the preceding one.

In 1834 another Westminster Abbey performance had 644 singers and instrumentalists in attendance. At the Crystal Palace in 1857 the rafters resounded to the robust thunder of 2000 voices and 250 instruments. This assemblage was little more than a warm up for the 1859 centenary of Handel's birth. For that unique occasion Sir Michael Costa drew on the resources of a 2765-voice chorus (approximately the total seating capacity

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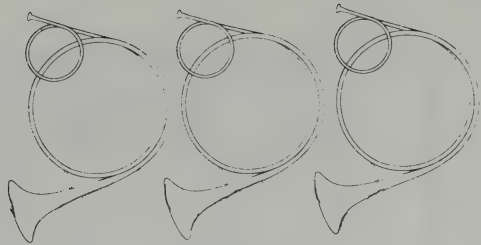
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of Symphony Hall in Boston!) balanced by an orchestra of 460 players. The *ne plus ultra* was reached about a century ago at a London Triennial Festival: a chorus of 4000 and an orchestra of 500. The American record for the "Most Massive *Messiah*" seems to belong to Leopold Damrosch, who attacked *Messiah* on May 7, 1881 in New York City with a chorus of 2000 voices. Symphony Hall in Boston can, however, claim a record of sorts. When the American Guild of Organists held its National Convention in Boston in 1976 organist E. Power Biggs, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops accompanied the entire audience in the "Hallelujah" chorus.

The Handel & Haydn Society never indulged in the grossest excesses of the nineteenth century, but was not immune from their influence. In fact, as America's oldest and most distinguished choral society, it established the standards for others to follow. Five hundred voices were not uncommon for *Messiah* during some periods. So thoroughly was the more-is-better concept entrenched, that the official history of the Society reports almost apologetically that for the 1883 *Messiah* "the chorus was small, only two hundred and sixty-seven, but sang with spirit and precision."

These excessively large choruses simply crushed Handel's finely wrought orchestration, which was thought to be hopelessly "thin" for contemporary tastes. Not only was the number of instruments increased, but "additional accompaniments" were inserted into the original scoring. Mozart himself started the trend in the late eighteenth century, not to overload the accompaniment, but to bring it closer to Classic ideals. The Handel & Haydn Society used his additions and commissioned the well-known composer Robert Franz to complete what Mozart had begun.

A few conductors and musicologists realized that these performances of *Messiah* made a travesty of the work. Sir Thomas Beecham, in a recording made in 1947, affected a compromise solution by using three choruses of different sizes consisting of 42, 65, and 250 voices respectively. The smaller groups were composed of professional singers and employed whenever florid lines required an especially clear presentation. G. Wallace Woodworth of Harvard assembled a Handelian orchestra for a performance of Part I of *Messiah* in 1952, but his chorus was the customary large one. In spite of these and other sporadic attempts at authenticity, a bloated approach to *Messiah* prevailed as recently as two decades ago. A typical Handel & Haydn performance of the time enlisted the ardor of 150 singers or more.

Merely out of deference to a great composer and his masterpiece, change could not be long in coming. In the early sixties Thomas Dunn led a series of performances with the New York Festival Orchestra and Chorus in which he avoided the compromises of Beecham and presented *Messiah* in conformity with the performance tradition established by Handel. This included an orchestra of appropriate size and distribution, professional choral and instrumental performers in roughly equal numbers, and respect for the performance techniques known to Handel. Mr. Dunn also implemented a practice, observed on certain occasions by Handel, of employing the orchestra in either full (*ripieno*) or solo (*concertino*) configurations. Handel marked his own conducting

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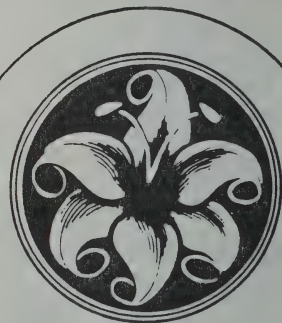
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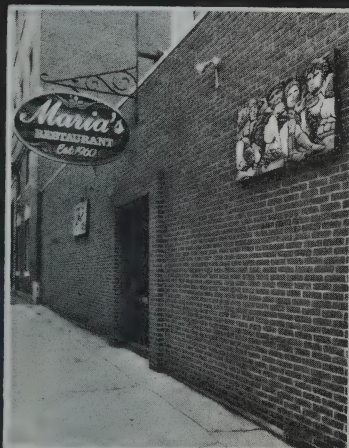
score carefully, thus his exact intentions in this matter can be easily ascertained. When Handel was personally involved in presenting *Messiah*, he made rather frequent changes and substitutions in the score; hence Mr. Dunn shaped his New York performances around the content of *Messiah* at specific points in its performance history.

When Thomas Dunn became Artistic Director of the Handel & Haydn Society in 1967, he continued the annual (since 1854) *Messiah* tradition, but radically revitalized it in accordance with principles developed in a happy cooperation of scholarship and musical insight. "Stripping away the varnish from an old master" may seem a tired cliché, so often has it been applied in musical circles to modern performances which attempt to recover the style of a work from the past. A better symbol has yet to be found, however. The visitor to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam today sees a Rembrandt hidden a generation ago; the canvases of Botticelli at the Uffizi in Florence shine more radiantly than could be imagined a few years ago. Older recordings of *Messiah*, when compared to current "restorations" of the work, impart the same kind of sensation on an aural plane. The Handel & Haydn Society was not founded 170 years ago to varnish Handel, but to let him sing ever more clearly. That goal remains paramount, especially in the great tradition of *Messiah* performances which continues today.



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*for those who know*

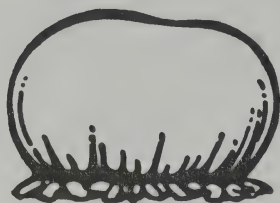


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**THOMAS DUNN**, Artistic Director

Named Artistic Director of the Handel & Haydn Society in 1967, Thomas Dunn created a new image for a venerable Boston institution by introducing dance, theatrical works and orchestral music to the Society's programs. The traditional choral repertoire was also renewed, starting with *Messiah* and extending now to most of the large masterpieces for chorus, soloists and orchestra. Under his guidance the Handel & Haydn Society has become a fully professional vocal and instrumental ensemble of growing national reputation.

**ELIZABETH PRUETT**, Soprano



Ms. Pruett received both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Juilliard School of Music in New York. She has appeared on national television in the Opera Theatre of St. Louis's production of Britten's *Albert Herring* and more recently in Channel 13's production of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. She was selected for the role of Violetta in the New York City Opera Touring Company production of *La Traviata* and has also appeared with the Virginia Opera Association, the Washington Opera and the Annapolis Opera. She appeared last season with the Handel & Haydn Society in Rameau's *Les Indes galantes*.

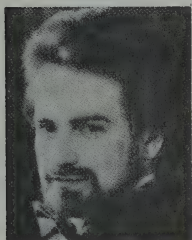
**MARY DAVENPORT**, Contralto



Currently Professor of Music (voice) in the School for the Arts, Boston University, Ms. Davenport has concertized throughout the United States and Europe, offering recitals in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Oslo and Zurich. Particularly associated with Menotti's *The Medium*, she has sung the title role on Broadway and in new productions by the Los Angeles and San Francisco opera companies. Ms. Davenport sang Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* under the direction of the composer and has performed at the Berlin Festival, Belgrade National Opera, Stuttgart Staatsoper, Munich Staatsoper, and the Gran Teatro del Liceo, Barcelona.

Ms. Davenport studied singing with Albert Garcia at the Royal College of Music in London and with Elizabeth Schumann at the Curtis Institute of Music.

**STANLEY CORNETT**, Tenor



Mr. Cornett received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Maryland, with additional studies at the Juilliard School and the Aldeburgh Festival Institute in England. He is presently Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Mr. Cornett has performed over thirty opera roles with companies such as the Baltimore, Syracuse, Chattanooga, and Washington Operas.

He appeared last season with the Oratorio Society of New York in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Carnegie Hall, with the New York Vocal Arts Ensemble at its "Voices of Christmas" Concert at Alice Tully Hall and with the Handel & Haydn Society in a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at Symphony Hall in Boston.

**SANFORD SYLVAN**, Baritone



Mr. Sylvan first received national recognition in September, 1979, as a prize winner in the Kennedy Center-Rockefeller Foundation International Vocal Competition. A graduate of the Manhattan School of Music, he made his debut in 1977 with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Pierre Boulez, singing the world premiere of Daniel Plante's *Love in the Asylum*.

He has appeared previously with the Handel & Haydn Society at Symphony Hall and also performs with the Cantata Singers, the Harvard Bach Society, Alea III, the New England Bach Festival, and the Marlboro Festival.

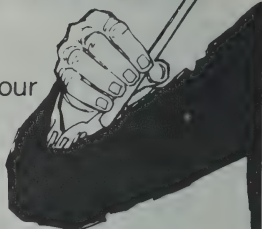


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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The LARK Society wishes to thank: Miriam Barndt-Webb for the loan of her fine harpsichord, built by William Dowd; Amerling & Burns for providing round-trip transportation for the Handel & Haydn Society performers; Joseph Cimmet for designing our program and flyer; and C.H. Robinson and X-Press Copy for their generous assistance. The beautiful flowers on stage have been provided on consignment by Skillin's Greenhouses and J.W. Minott Co.

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## LARK Society for Chamber Music

The LARK Society is delighted to sponsor tonight's program. This special event not only celebrates the holiday season, it also helps to celebrate the 15th anniversary season of the Portland String Quartet.

The LARK Society for Chamber Music takes its name from the initials of the Portland String Quartet members — Ronald Lantz, Julia Adams, Paul Ross, and Stephen Keckskemethy — and from one of Haydn's most famous string quartets, the LARK Quartet. We are a non-profit organization committed to promoting chamber music in Maine through support of the Quartet's performances and educational activities. Our goal is to insure the permanent residency in Maine of this internationally praised ensemble and to reach a growing audience of all ages throughout the state. Tonight's benefit will help us continue to fulfill that goal.



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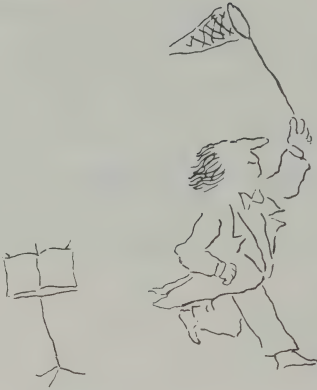
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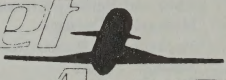
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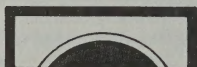
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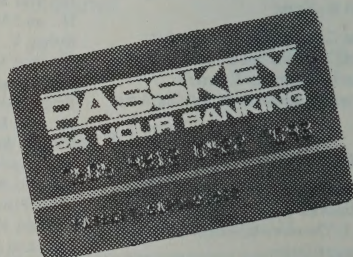
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violoncello

*Stephen Kecskemethy*  
violin

*Julia Adams*  
viola

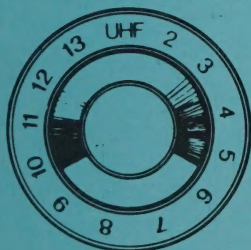
*Ronald Lantz*  
violin

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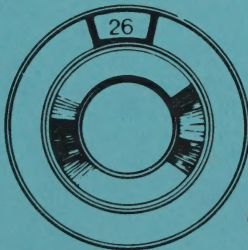


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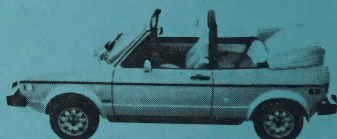
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